potentially contaminated by liquid leaking from the vessel whereby said sensor assembly is operable to detect leakage of the liquid.

16. (Amended) An assembly according to Claim 12 adapted to carry out remote monitoring by means of a telecommunication link arranged to transfer data from the sensor assembly to a remote destination.

17. (Amended) An assembly according to claim 12 wherein the radiation source and detector/analyser are adapted to be remote from the sensing location, being coupled to waveguide means for conveying radiation to and from the sensing location.

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

The present Preliminary Amendment is submitted to place the claims in more proper format under United States practice. By the present Preliminary Amendment the claims have been amended to no longer recite any improper multiple dependencies and to correct for minor informalities therein. None of the claim changes are deemed to narrow the scope of the claims.

The present application is believed to be in condition for a full and thorough examination on the merits. An early and favorable consideration of the present application is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

--4. (Amended) A method according to Claim [2 or] 3 wherein the hydrophobic element [companies] comprises polyvinylidene fluoride.

5. (Amended) A method according to [any preceding] Claim 1 wherein the radiation source and input means are operated to direct radiation towards said sensing location and the detector/analyser and output means are used to receive radiation reflected from the sensing location.

6. (Amended) A method according to [any of Claims 1 to 4] Claim 1 wherein the radiation source and input means are operated to direct radiation towards said sensing location and the detector/analyser and output means are used to receive radiation scattered at said sensing location.

7. (Amended) A method according to [any of Claims 1 to 4] Claim 1 wherein the radiation source and input means are operated to direct radiation towards said sensing location and the detector/analyser and output means are used to receive radiation transmitted through said sensing location.

8. (Amended) A method according to [any of Claims 1 to 4] Claim 1 wherein the radiation source and input means are operated to direct radiation towards said sensing location and the detector/analyser and output means are used to receive radiation emitted from said sensing location.

9. (Amended) A method according to [any preceding] Claim 1 including a step of examining the spectroscopic characteristics of the radiation received by the detector/analyser to provide data relating to the chemical nature of liquid at the sensing location.

10. (Amended) A method according to [any preceding] claim 1 wherein the radiation source and detector/analyser are remote from the site and are connected to the input and output means, respectively, via waveguide means.

11. (Amended) A method according to [any preceding] claim 1 wherein there are a plurality of sensor assemblies which are located at different sites, and the method includes switching the connection of the radiation source and/or the detector/analyser between different sensor assemblies.

14. (Amended) An assembly according to Claim 10 [or 11] wherein the detector/analyser comprises means for spectroscopic analysis.

15. (Amended) An assembly according to Claim 12 further comprising a vessel containing a hydrophobic liquid and [a sensor assembly] wherein said hydrophobic element is located at a site potentially contaminated by liquid leaking from the vessel [and adapted to carry out the method of any of Claims 1 to 11] whereby said sensor assembly is operable to detect leakage of the liquid.

16. (Amended) An assembly according to Claim 12[, 13, 14 or 15] adapted to carry out remote monitoring by means of a telecommunication link arranged to transfer data from the sensor assembly to a remote destination.

17. (Amended) An assembly according to claim 12[, 13, 14, 15 or 16] wherein the radiation source and detector/analyser are adapted to be remote from the sensing location, being coupled to waveguide means for conveying radiation to and from the sensing location.--